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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/737,017	12/16/2003	Myron E. Ullman	1474AUCIPDIVCONT	5589
27542	7590	05/10/2004	EXAMINER	
SAND & SEBOLT AEGIS TOWER, SUITE 1100 4940 MUNSON STREET, NW CANTON, OH 44718-3615			THOMAS, ALEXANDER S	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1772	

DATE MAILED: 05/10/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/737,017

Applicant(s)

ULLMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Alexander Thomas

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claims 1-20 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The term "flexible" in the claims is not supported by the original disclosure. The original disclosure is directed to semi-rigid materials. There is also no original disclosure directed to "being flexible about ... of the" in claims 1 and 16.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 1-20 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-22 of U.S. Patent No.

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6,663,937. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the mat in the patent is disclosed as flexible and therefore the body of the mat must be flexible to a degree. Furthermore, the ribs of the mat in the patent are formed from rubber which is inherently flexible to a degree.

Concerning claim 16, any material is flexible to a degree and therefore the strips in the instant claims do not distinguish over the reference. In any event, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the inserts flexible since the mat as a whole is claimed as flexible and having a rigid insert would go against the desirability of a flexible mat.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-16 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by WO 96/36268. See pages 3-5 of the reference and Figures 1-3.

6. Claims 1-3, 6-8, 10-16, 18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sijpesteijn. See Figure 2, column 3, lines 19-27 and column 4, line 4.

The reference discloses a mat made from "relatively rigid" material and "resilient" material. Both of these materials may be considered flexible to a degree and therefore the mat of the reference would be flexible to a degree.

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7. Claims 1-3, 6-8, 10-16 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Kessler et al ('399). See Figure 1 and column 2, lines 19-58. The reference discloses a mat that is made from resilient material and therefore would inherently be flexible to a degree. In any event, any material can be considered flexible to a degree and therefore meet the instant claim limitations regarding flexibility.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 4, 9 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over WO 96/36268 in view of Yamamoto et al. The primary reference discloses the invention substantially as claimed; see pages 3-5 of the reference and Figures 1-3. However it does not disclose the use of hook and loop fasteners as a means of removably attaching the material strips in the slots on the mat. The primary reference suggests the use of any suitable means to attach the strips to the mat; see page 5, lines 9-13. The secondary reference discloses the use of hook and loop fasteners to removably attach a carpet strip to a mat; see Figure 3 and column 3, lines 12-19. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use hook/loop fasteners as an attaching means to adhere the carpet strips to the rails in the article of the primary

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reference in view of the suggestion at column 1, lines 21-45 and the Abstract of Yamamoto et al.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander Thomas whose telephone number is 571-272-1502. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30-4:00 M-THUR.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 571-272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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ALEXANDER S. THOMAS
PRIMARY EXAMINER